DAVID APTER & ASSOCIATES
1625 K Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006
202/393-2200

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October 1, 1981

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ambassador Johnson
FROM: David Apter DA
RE: Freedom House

Attached is a copy of the letter from the Center for Appeals for Freedom with the statement by the Togolese Democratic Movement. The Center is a Freedom House program. Bayard Ruston is Chairman.

The Executive Director of Freedom House is Leonard R. Sussman. He is the gentlemen who said that he would like to hear from you before they go to press at the end of the week. His phone number is the same as on the letterhead--(212) 730-7744. If you wish, please feel free to call from our office or charge the call to our number.

DA/rlb

Attachment

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CENTER FOR APPEALS FOR FREEDOM
Documenting the Universal Struggle For Freedom
FREEDOM HOUSE
20 West 40th Street
New York, NY 10018
(212) 730-7748

Freedom Appeals a bimonthly

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Lecture Bur

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September 18, 1981

Mr. A. Traore
Press Officer
Permanent Mission of Togo
to the U.N.
112 East 40th St.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Mr. Traore:

Enclosed herewith is a news item regarding Togo which is scheduled to appear in the next issue of our magazine, Freedom Appeals.

If you have any comments, please convey them to us as soon as possible. We will be glad to add your response to this piece in Freedom Appeals.

Sincerely,
Ludmilla Thorne
Ludmilla Thorne
Editor

Enclosure(1)

STATEMENT BY THE TOGOLESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

Togo, a small North West African country located between Ghana and Nigeria, and ruled by a military dictatorship under General Etienne Gnassingbe Eyadema, has reportedly been the site of serious human-rights violations in the last few years.

The Togolese Democratic Movement (Mouvement togolais pour la democratie (MTD), a Paris-based opposition group, issued a statement on May 29, 1981, announcing that a new wave of terror has recently been unleashed against Togo's political dissenters.

The MTD claims that four major cases of torture, harassment, arrest, and murder have occurred since last December.

According to the MTD report, in early December of 1980, four Togolese military officers from the North were killed when their jeep was destroyed by an explosive device. The MTD states that a source within the government noted that these assassinations were ordered by Gen. Eyadema, who allegedly believed that the four officers were in the process of preparing a coup-d'etat.

The MTD report also cites 35 persons who were arrested in Togo's capital city of Lome, supposedly for belonging to a counterfeiting ring. The 35 people were reportedly subjected to torture, which led to the death of at least two prisoners.

The most important case of repression, says the MTD, is the shooting of seven persons by the Togolese army on the night of December 28, 1980. The seven--Toussaint Amelio, Tchah Toi, Tchahcwui Limkpessim, Djato Kpessi, Kokou, Aliou, and Koffi Lotti--were apparently accused of fomenting a plot to overthrow Gen. Eyadema. According to the MTD, the bodies of the seven were left unburied and were discovered a week later, at which time the suthorities arranged for their burial at 11 o' clock in the evening, in a mass grave at the Lome municipal cemetery.

In January of 1981, reports the MTD, four persons were arrested for distributing political tracts. An MTD source in Lome stated that all four--Elisabeth Meusah, Fine Louis, Steven, and Esse--have been subjected to torture.

Amnesty International has also reported on human rights violations in Togo. The London-based human-rights organization investigated the cases of Kodjovi Emmanuel de Souza, Kouao Stephan Sanvee, Kwassi Jean Savi de Tove, Kouassivi Alphonse de Souza and Abalo de Souza, who were convicted by Togo's Security Court in August, 1979 for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the government. The first two individuals were given death sentences which were lated commuted to life imprisonment, and the others received prison sentences ranging from five to ten years. The 1980 Amnesty International Report pointed out that the trial failed to establish adequately the degree of guilt of the accused and that the sentences appeared unwarranted and severe. Amnesty found that there were procedural irregularities at all stages of the judicial process, particularly with regard to the right to defense counsel.

TOGOLESE NEWS ITEM

Freedom House's Comparative Survey of Freedom, an annual assessment of global political and civil liberties, assigned Togo a rating of seven on a scale of one (most free) to seven (least free). The Survey comments that in Togo there is a deliberate denial of separation of power. No criticism of the government is tolerated in the media, and there is little guarantee of a rule of law: people have been imprisoned and beaten on many occasions for such offenses as the distribution of leaflets or failure to wear a party badge.

Dr. Raymond D. Gastil
Director
Comparative Survey
of Freedom

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MISSION PERMANENTE DU TOGO
AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES
112 East 40th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

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New-York, le 30 [illegible]

Le Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

à

Ms Ludmilla THORNE

Editor
FREEDOM House
20, West 40th Street
NEW-YORK, N.Y. 10018

Dear Ms. THORNE,

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to respond to the false allegations about Togo submitted to you by those who call themselves a "democratic movement".

This document is a blatant example of the big lie. Though such downright falsehoods and misleading statements do not deserve serious consideration, we want organizations which we respect, to know the truth.

In view of the intellectual honesty, the Center for Appeals of Freedom has demonstrated by submitting this to us for comment, we believe that the best way to put an end to these poisonous stories is to invite representatives of your organization, to come to Togo to gain an on-the-spot understanding of the realities of our political, economic, social, and

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[illegible] our doors are opened [illegible] of the few African countries that [illegible] visas. We have nothing to hide.

However, we would like to tell you something about the political development of our country, for this will give you a better understanding of the motives of those who make these false charges.

Like many of our neighbors, the history of our country is marked with experiences which brought our people much pain and suffering. The years of colonial domination ended on April 27, I960, when our entire people threw off this yoke by the historic vote which brought us independence.

We had hoped that this unity of purpose would be a starting point for everyone from north to south, east to west, from the interior to the border to work in harmony to solve the problems of hunger, illiteracy, and disease, and to build our economy.

Unfortunately, immediately following political independence, a small group of willfull men who represented commercial interests, seized control so that they could benefit from the immense wealth of our country. They set up a repressive system of government, divided the country into opposing regional factions, and emptied the coffers of the country to serve their own interests.

They filled the prisons with loyal Togolese who dared to dissent. Out of only I.800.000 inhabitants, 2.507 persons languished in the jails, guilty only of having wanted to express their concern about the future of the country.

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A large part of the population sought refuge in exile. Armed terrorists called "action groups" traversed the country, burned houses, and plundered

the harvest of [illegible] citizens. This was the end result of the Olympio regime.

Faced with this situation, the people turned to the only organized group that could put an end to repression, the Togolese citizen's army. The army could not remain indifferent to the dismay of the citizens. On January I3, I963, it intervened to put an end to injustice, stay anarchy, and create the conditions for national peace and reconciliation. Sylvanus Olympio died during that coup d'etat.

It is important that you know that the Togolse citizens army released all political prisoners and immediately returned to its quarters to allow a civilian government, headed by Nicolas GRUNITZKY, to take over the reins of government.

Unfortunately, the second republic did little to correct conditions. There were more arbitrary arrests. Soon, the prisons which had been emptied by the army on January I3, I963, again were filled with nearly 500 political prisoners. Too many! Too many!

Again there were disorders. The people appealed to the only organized force for relief. On January I3, I967, the army again assumed control. Its leader, Gnassingbe Eyadema assumed the Presidency and established a government in which every Ministry, except that of Defence, was headed by a civilian.

For nearly I5 years the regime of the new Togo has met every test. Lome, the capital of the Togolese republic has become an international center of dialogue, peace, and a forum where the leaders of African nations meet to discuss problems of subregional and world economic development. Meetings of the Economic Community of Africa, ECOWAS, and the famed international agreements known as Lome I and Lome II, illustrated why some political observers call us

the "Switzerland of Africa".

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At the same time, the GNP has risen dramatically, there is no more hunger, schools are now within walking distance of every child, there is an increasing availablity of clean water in every section of the country, and new hospitals and health clinics to care for the sick.

The new Togo respects scrupulously the fundamental principles of human rights. A new Constitution has been adopted. A 67 member legislative parliament has been elected. President Eyadema was reelected by vote of the people in I979. A number of our judges have just returned from the United States, where they have been studying your judicial system. And Togo has just been elected for 3 years to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

While all of this has been going on, Gilchrist Olympio, the son of the deceased dictator has been leading a pack of the exiled old guard who seek to regain power, under the misleading name of the Togolese Movement for Democracy. Jealous of the accomplishments of the Togolese people and the party which has unified and reconciled them, this professional exile has unswervingly pursued personal vengeance. As he has no support in the country, his group recruited non-African mercenaries to come into Togo on a mission of assassination. Fortunately this planned bloodbath by heavily armed mercenaries was exposed in I978 and most of the instigators were identified .

In august of I979, a democratic public trial was held in which Amnesty International was invited to attend in the person of Mr. Dust. The indicted were defended by eminent lawyers. Today, the six condemned in that trial constitute the only political prisoners in Togo. You will note that even the MTD statement recognizes that death sentences were commuted to life imprisonnement,

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[illegible] consistent with their [illegible] charges of a wave of terror and bodies left unburied.

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We wish to repeat There are six men in our jails who one might call political prisoners. They are there because they paid mercenaries to come here for purposes of assassination. This is a far cry from the 2.507 political prisoners, the political assassinations, and the torture and brutality of all sorts that Togo suffered during the autocratic regime of Sylvanus Olympio, spiritual father of the MTD.

We regret that so much attention must be given to one who left the country nearly 20 years ago and who seeks to mislead people of good faith who have not had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the real situation in Togo today.

You will get a different story from the American who have lived and worked in our villages. You will get a different story from American Journalists who have come here to seek the truth, one of whom described Togo in a news dispatch a few weeks ago as "an oasis in a troubled region".

We are pleased that you have given us an opportunity to reply to this MTD document at the same time that you print the accusations. Better still, we hope that you will comme to Togo to conduct your own research rather than depending on the word of those whose motives are so questionable.

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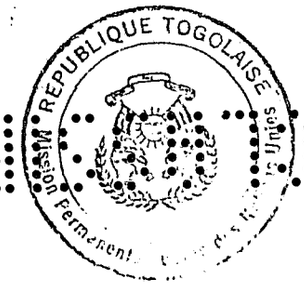

Sincerely Yours,

Koffi ADJOYI